VANCOUVER metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

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What twerked, what didn't
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Just say no to barbed wire
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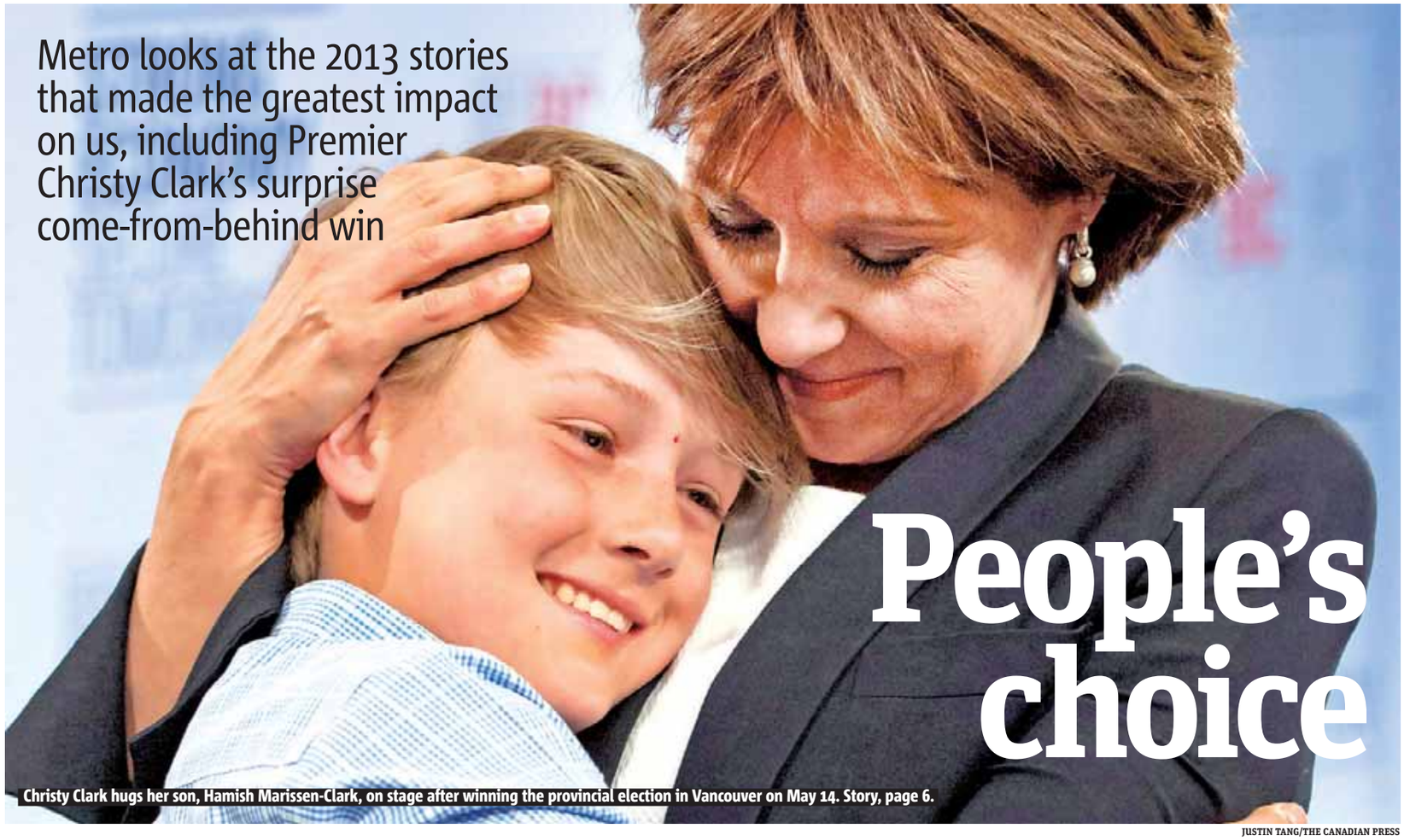
No. 81 gets Grey Cup No. 3
PAGE 39

Metro looks at the 2013 stories that made the greatest impact on us, including Premier Christy Clark's surprise come-from-behind win

# People's choice



Christy Clark hugs her son, Hamish Marissen-Clark, on stage after winning the provincial election in Vancouver on May 14. Story, page 6.

JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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**Local**

Metro Vancouver reporters look at some of the stories from 2013 that touched them personally.

**Readers' online selections**

Grr, argh: Stories that had Vancouverites frothing at the mouth — as chosen by our Metropolitan Panel

### This does not bode well ...

This sure won't help the cause of pipeline proponents. In March the largest oil-spill response ship on the B.C. coast was on its way to a Vancouver press conference, where the federal natural resources minister was touting the government's ability to manage spills, when it ran aground off Sand Heads. In all it took seven hours for Burrard Cleaner No. 9 to reach its destination, though officials were quick to stress that in the event of an emergency, the ship can travel much faster. METRO

### Aren't condoms supposed to prevent trouble?

A UBC student who tried to navigate U.S. customs three times in March claimed she was interrogated and accused of being a sex worker because she was carrying condoms and sexy lingerie in her luggage. Under U.S. law, suspicion of prostitution is enough to deny someone admission to the country. METRO

Former Beladean Trailer Park resident Stephen Chalmers sits outside his new trailer with his dog, Spaghetti, on Dec. 5. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

# Metro story nets new digs for marginalized man

**Home sweet home.**
Two months after moving into his trailer, Stephen Chalmers is learning to adjust to his surroundings

KATE WEBB
Metro reporter

The wooden walkway up to Stephen Chalmers' new trailer sparkles with red and blue Christmas lights, and on clear nights moonlight spills through tall pine trees onto the quiet campground where he has lived for nearly two months now.

The 54-year-old is still getting used to his new surroundings after moving out of a dilapidated trailer at the run-down Beladean Trailer Park in Surrey, which lost power in September due to an improperly supervised motel demolition.

"I'm 100 times better. I feel better, I sleep better," says Chalmers, who suffers from multiple mental illnesses and lives on a meager disability income.

After Metro ran stories about the outage, as well as the fact that Chalmers could not find a new park willing to accept his old, leaky 1989 trailer, an online campaign raised enough money to buy him a newer, more functional 1999 fifth-wheel.

But the complex problems of a man who has overcome crack addiction and alcoholism and still struggles daily with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder cannot be neatly resolved with four walls of aluminum and vinyl.

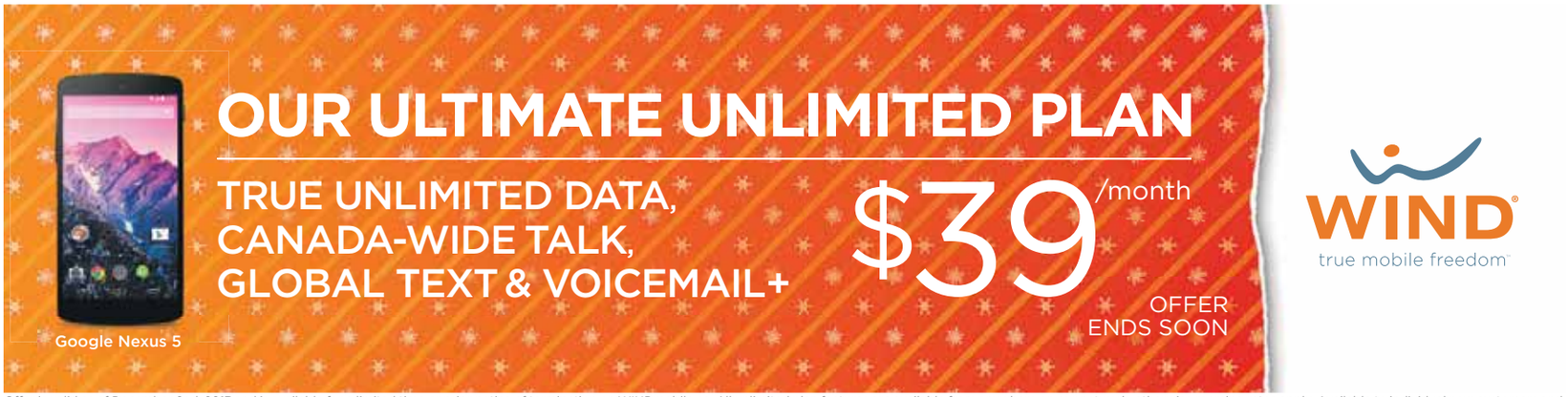
Some days he feels up and some days he feels down, he says. The weather, getting used to his new neighbours and the stress of living on a low income — all of these have an effect on his moods.

But Chalmers says he seeks help when he needs it from the mental-health-care system, from friends and from a local food bank that he visits regularly.

All in all, he says he is proud that by sharing his story publicly he has become someone people approach for advice about how to seek help.

"I feel more positive about myself," Chalmers tells Metro. "I'm more sure of myself. I feel more personable towards myself.... I think of myself as someone who actually deserves to be respected, which, that's kind of foreign territory to me."

Power was finally restored to the Beladean on Dec. 6, almost 12 weeks to the day after it went out. The residents' legal battle to get compensation for their misery and out-of-pocket expenses is ongoing.

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# Avalanche Week: Behind the scenes

**Impact of 2003 slide.** Five-day, multi-media feature looked at the country's most jarring avalanche disaster

MATT KIELTYKA
Metro reporter

It was the avalanche that changed everything.

In 2003, seven 15-year-olds from Alberta's Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School were killed by a slide during a ski trip in British Columbia's Connaught Creek.

The decade that followed the nation's most jarring and painful avalanche disaster was one of heightened awareness, unprecedented government action and an evolutionary leap forward in the avalanche safety and prevention industry.

To tell the story and do it justice, a one-off article wasn't going to cut it. That's why Metro Vancouver chose to launch Avalanche Week in late January, a five-day, multi-media feature looking at the slide and its lasting impacts.

The result was an eye-opening and rewarding experience for all those involved in putting it together.

As part of the project, I was fortunate enough to travel to Revelstoke, B.C. with fellow reporter Kate Webb to see avalanche country first-hand (albeit after enduring broke-down buses and closed winter highways on the way from Vancouver).

We talked to survivors and responders alike about their darkest memories.

The Canadian Avalanche Centre — formed in the aftermath of the Connaught Creek slide — let us sit in on a day of their operations, explaining the science and art behind forecasting and public safety.

We spoke to ski patrols that trigger avalanches at resorts to protect skiers, and their Howitzer-firing military counterparts that do the same to keep drivers safe as they wind through Canada's most treacherous mountain passes.

I took part in a two-day avalanche safety course to learn how to avoid avalanche terrain and save lives.

To top it all, I was even buried alive — left to my own thoughts in complete isolated darkness — and sniffed out by a search dog during an avalanche rescue drill.

The experiences will stay with me, as will my appreciation for all the victims' families, survivors and dedicated professionals who helped us along the way.

Mountains — with all their risks and rewards — are an unavoidable way of life in the West, but media often only descend on affected communities in the wake of tragedy.

The gratitude shown to us for being proactive and in-depth in our reporting was great, and our coverage was comprehensive and unique as a result.

With their help, we did the story justice.

Avalanche Week won the 2013 Metro President's Cup for Best Feature and was nominated for Best Cross-Platform Initiative at this year's Canadian Online Publishing Awards.

**A woman takes part in an avalanche course at Mount Seymour in January 2013.** JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

# Public pianos: City's best initiative?

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

**Park-side pianos**

## Ticklin' ivories

Four colourfully painted pianos, placed in parks and along the seawall for passersby to play a ditty, landed a spot in Vancouverites' hearts in summer 2013. The inaugural Keys to the Streets project encouraged people to gather to enjoy a tune and inspired a host of impromptu concerts enjoyed by thousands.

Run by a team from Vancouver's six post-secondary institutions, the project mimicked the "Play me, I'm yours" display, which originated in Britain in 2008.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

**What a deal**

## $200

**It only cost $200. With free pianos from Craigslist — they were otherwise destined for the dump — and donations of moving equipment and student artwork, the volunteer-led project was possibly the cheapest initiative to bring such widespread joy. Organizers figure they spent a few hundred bucks to fix sticky keys, replace covers and chains, and touch up paint throughout one of the driest summers on record.**

**A few noisy nights**

## City only receives one complaint

Organizers informally asked a few rowdy players to tone down the volume after 11 p.m., but the response to the instruments was overwhelmingly positive from tourists and residents alike. One person even emailed the city to say the pianos created a "sense of belonging."

The city only received one complaint after a particularly fortissimo late-night performance woke up a neighbour near Robson Park.

**Encore!**

## Pianos should be back next summer

Vancouver expects to see these colourful pianos back on the streets in summer 2014.

Potential partners have approached the organizers in hopes of turning their locations into concert venues.

While the exact set list is yet to be determined, aspiring street musicians should stay tuned for more information.

**More readers' online picks — What made you proud**

## *2M visits, zero deaths: Insite's success story*

A man shooting up in the back doorway of an alley with dirty water. A First Nations elder found dead in her rocking chair with a needle in her arm. Countless people overdosing and dying alone in dilapidated single room occupancy hotels.

That was what addiction looked like in the Downtown Eastside before Insite, North America's first legal supervised drug injection site, opened its doors, said Mark Townsend of the Portland Hotel Society, which helps operate the site.

But 10 years later, despite continuous opposition from the federal Conservative government, the picture is much brighter.

"We brought people inside. To me that's the really great thing," Townsend said.

Not a single death has occurred during more than 2 million visits under Insite's watchful nurses and counsellors, all because a group of allies from the community, the city and the province decided "not to treat addicts like animals," Townsend said.

The attitude toward the site has dramatically changed since it opened, he said. Police officers broadcasted their support by recommending drug users go to Insite to prevent deaths.

And the statistics prove Insite has successfully reduced harm over the past decade. Life expectancy has gone up by a decade, the rate of HIV/AIDS has dropped in the neighbourhood and people that use Insite are more likely to enroll in detox programs.

Despite such research that supports Insite's mission, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government led a charge against the site due to its "tough on crime" agenda.

Yet attempts to close Insite were shut down by the B.C. Supreme Court, the B.C. Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada.

METRO

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# May 14: Election night fun

**Suprise!** Covering elections can be a nail-biter, especially when you've bet on the wrong team

JEFF HODSON
Managing editor

We plan our election coverage based on what we think is the best use of our (limited) resources.

In other words, sometimes we hedge. And boy, sometimes we hedge wrong.

Here's a quick, behind the curtains look at how we covered the May 14 provincial election.

Election nights begin with thumb-twiddling tedium and pent-up anticipation. They usually finish in an explosion of cold sweat and temple-throbbing stress as the clock ticks down to our print deadline. I think they're fun.

Plus, I ordered pizza and pop for the newsroom.

On this night, we planned our coverage believing — I think like almost everyone else in B.C. — that the NDP would carry the day.

Reporter Matt Kieltyka and photographer Jennifer Gauthier headed to the NDP headquarters, while Emily Jackson went to the Liberals.

Kate Webb was tasked with a reaction piece and as well as the Point-Grey battle between the premier and NDP hopeful David Eby. Sports reporter Cam Tucker was seconded to cover the fast-paced action of Vancouver False-Creek.

Then we waited, compulsively refreshing the Elections B.C. site as polling stations trickled, then flooded in.

It became apparent fairly soon that despite the polling, the Liberals were on their way to victory. The photographer was re-assigned to the Liberal celebration and everything fell into place in a frantic, hazy fog where hours passed like seconds. We wrapped around 1 a.m.

I was tempted to run with a slightly cheeky headline, Comeback Kid, but opted for something less sassy.

Next time.

Premier Christy Clark speaks at the B.C. Liberal victory party at Vancouver's Wall Centre after being re-elected on May 14, 2013.
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO

**More readers' online picks**

**Saddest**

## Death of Elisa Lam

Those who knew Elisa Lam said she will be remembered for her sweet smile and outgoing personality.

Lam, of Vancouver, travelled alone to Los Angeles on Jan. 26, 2013.

Her body was found Feb. 19 at the bottom of a water tank cistern at the Cecil Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

A maintenance worker discovered the 21-year-old University of British Columbia student's body after guests complained of low water pressure.

The L.A. County Coroner's Office, said Lam's death was in part due to her bipolar disorder and ruled accidental.

METRO

Recycle Your Christmas Tree

After the holiday season, recycle your live, cut Christmas tree. Remove all the decorations and tinsel from the tree and use one of the following options:

Lions Club Chipping Events:

**Saturday, January 4 and Sunday, January 5,** between 10 am - 4 pm at these locations:

- **Kerrisdale Community Ice Rink parking lot** 5670 East Boulevard north of 41st Avenue
- **Kitsilano Beach parking lot** Cornwall Avenue and Arbutus Street
- **Sunset Beach upper parking lot** Beach Avenue and Broughton Street
- **Rona Home & Garden Grandview Store** 2727 East 12th Avenue – overflow parking lot north of Grandview Highway, south of 12th Avenue

**Donations of cash and non-perishable food items will be accepted and distributed to local charities.**

Residential Collection:

You may set out your live cut Christmas tree before 7 am on your Green Bin collection day until January 31. Trees should be set out on their own, 1 metre clear of your Green Bin(s) and laid on their sides. Do not place your tree inside your bin or bag or bundle it.

Drop-Off Depots:

You may drop off your tree at no charge until January 31 at the Vancouver South Transfer Station, 377 Kent Avenue North, or Vancouver Landfill, 5400 72nd Street, Delta.

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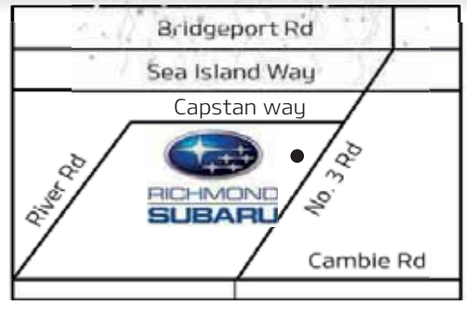


**National** Rob Ford, Senate scandal, Toilet Squirrel: 2013 was a big year. Here's the stories that called us to action, made us laugh or impacted our lives in other ways.

# Trudging through thigh-deep water to snap an iconic image

ROBSON FLETCHER
Metro reporter

## 'I had better get the heck out of there'

Standing at a downtown street corner, thigh-deep in brown water, I snapped one of my favourite photos of the Calgary flood.

A man was walking east along 9 Avenue, passing beneath a powerless streetlight at 4 Street SE, with the underpass behind him almost unrecognizable as it was filled to its ceiling with floodwater. He was carrying a backpack and looking down as he trudged through the road-turned-river, with the flood-ravaged Saddledome in the background behind him.

The image, to me, summed up just how far Calgary's rivers had encroached into the heart of the city.

Then I realized I had better get the heck out of there.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO IN CALGARY

## An empty, eerie downtown core

The penny dropped when another downtown wader came up from behind me to show me his own photo, one he had taken on his iPhone just a couple hours earlier, in the same spot. It showed the same underpass, with nearly two metres less water in it.

"It's filling up fast," he said.

I had heard on the radio that the river levels had begun receding by this point, but I quickly realized water was still making its way to the low-lying East Village area, and the once thigh-deep water was now making its way to my waist.

So I made my way west, to higher ground, and continued exploring an eerily quiet downtown.

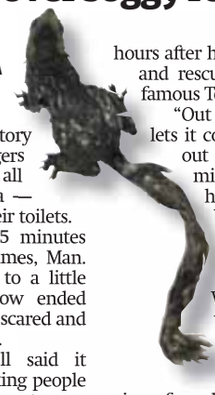
No power. No cars. No one out on the streets.

Usually bustling at this time of the day, the core of the city was nearly completely deserted by Friday afternoon, June 21. It was a testament to the power of the rivers, but also to the orderly evacuation plan that was executed on such short notice.

It's a memory I'll keep for life.

# Toilet Squirrel. 'Peg newsroom goes nuts over soggy rodent

BERNICE PONTANILLA
Metro reporter



It was the summer story that had Winnipeggers — and likely others all over North America — looking warily at their toilets.

And it led to 15 minutes of fame for a St. James, Man. woman, all thanks to a little critter that somehow ended up in her toilet wet, scared and clinging for dear life.

Angela Campbell said it was her love of making people laugh that spurred her to contact Metro Winnipeg only hours after her encounter with and rescue of the now infamous Toilet Squirrel.

"Out of all of the toilets it could have climbed out of, I'm glad it was mine and that I could help it," said Campbell in a December interview with Metro.

Once Metro Winnipeg broke the story online, Campbell was inundated with requests for interviews from local, national and international media outlets.

**Metro's choice**

## Starman blows our minds

HENRIETTA WALMARK
Metro copy editor

Commander's log — stardate: 04-12-2013: "Here am I floating in my tin can/A last glimpse of the world/Planet Earth is blue and there's nothing left to do."

Few events in 2013 eclipsed Chris Hadfield's cover of David Bowie's Space Oddity. The video of the astronaut literally floating in his "tin can" as he sang his farewell to life aboard the International Space Station capped an extraordinary mission of firsts.

As the ISS orbited Earth, he tweeted stunning photos of the planet, chatted with William Shatner, shared videos of zero-gravity science experiments, did Q&A's with kids via satellite-links and performed an interspace duet with Ed Robertson.

Hadfield was having the time of his life, and took us along for the ride.

But what's really cool is what's been left trailing in the stardust. Hadfield allowed me and millions of others to experience Earth and the universe as never before, sparking our imagination and reigniting interest in the final frontier as a space worth exploring.

**Readers' online selections**

Extra-terrestrials? Nose picking? What is this, you ask? Well, it's what you told us — via our Metropolitan Panel — were your favourite Metro online national news stories of the year

## UFO sightings double in Canada

Ufology Research issued its Canadian UFO survey in May and the stats revealed reported sightings doubled in 2012. "Polls have shown that one in 10 Canadians believe they have seen a UFO. That's three to four million people with UFO experiences," said Chris Rutkowski of Ufology. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

## T.O. man calls for stem-cell donations

In July, Chris Taylor of Toronto called on healthy 17- to 35-year-olds to become stem-cell donors. "I need one, it turns out, to save my life," he told Metro. "More importantly, it's for everyone who needs one." OneMatch is a program run by Canadian Blood Services which matches potential stem-cell donors to unrelated patients. Donors sign up for free and get a package in the mail containing a swab kit. **METRO**

## Nose pickers, rejoice

If you don't like gross things, this story is snot for you. An associate professor of biochemistry at the University of Saskatchewan is trying to get more students interested in science by looking at the health benefits of picking your nose and eating it. Scott Napper says mucous traps germs and stops them from getting into our body, but if we consume that mucous, it could help train our immune system by exposing it to the germs. **THE CANADIAN PRESS/CKOM**

## New rules for Canuck drivers

In early 2012, this came in from the department of red tape you didn't know existed: Canadians were required by law to have an international driving permit in addition to their regular licences when driving in Florida. The new law applied to any non-resident, but has since been unanimously repealed by legislators. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

**Readers' + Metro's choice**

## Teen-trafficking case lacked outrage

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
Metro reporter

Three girls ran away from a group home last year, lured away by a prostitution ring and put to work in Toronto.

That story, more than any I've covered, left an impact.

The girls were in the care of the province, in a place that was supposed to be secure. But there was no public outrage. Critics for both opposition parties knew few details of the case and the Ministry of Child and Youth Services simply said after the trial that safety would be "enhanced."

Is that it? I wanted to see someone in power care and hear some promises about how it will never be allowed to happen again.

# No Tax for December!

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# #omg! Readers all a-Twitter over TEMP

Canadian author Douglas Coupland, best-known for his groundbreaking novel Generation X, visited Metro's head office just before the launch of TEMP. The 20-part fiction series was published in Metro throughout November. Here's how Metro readers responded on Twitter:

**@jason_michael:** A sincere heartfelt Thank You to @DouglasCoupland for TEMP. I am a temp working for the government and your words continue to inspire!

**@Teyemtenot:** yet another reason why Metro is my favourite thing to read in the morning!

**@hurricanediana:** thanks for keeping me entertained for 20 a.m. commutes. Funny, surprisingly thought-provoking and relevant.

**@KaT4_2012:** read TEMP every day! #youguysnailedit #precariousworkiseverywhere Douglas Coupland is brilliant

**@morgancadenhead:** The collaboration between @DouglasCoupland and @MetroNewsCanada is fascinating. A truly unique way to approach fiction.

**@SuzanneMaryse:** i am loving this! ... Coupland nails the post-modern condition once again

**@ctmwyn:** The best part about @DouglasCoupland #Temp is the high concentration of #CliffHangers #Serialization

METRO

Web editor Hannah Zitner chats with Douglas Coupland during the author's visit to Metro's head office in Toronto on Oct. 28. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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Door Crasher!

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**Digital** Metro's digital team takes a look back at 2013 and shares some of their most memorable stories

# The lighter side of the law. A dash of humour helps humanize VicPD

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro digital reporter

On the Metro digital desk, we're well aware that funny stories are more likely to be shared by our online readers; it's an insight we share with the Victoria Police Department.

Last year, when a naive Reddit user posted about buying marijuana at the University of Victoria, VicPD Const. Mike Russell was there.

Using the "VicPDCanada" handle, Russell announced himself with a simple "cough," reminding users that the long arm of the law extends online.

Since then, he and his partner Bowen Osoko have been working to build the force's social media cred.

And despite the serious nature of police work, the pair hasn't shied away from the absurdist humour endemic to Internet culture.

When cops busted drug dealers hiding cocaine in fake "Durasell" batteries in January, Russell penned a hilarious press release and offered tips to others looking to secure their stash.

"Don't forget to label it 'not drugs' so we don't inadvertently look inside," he said.

When handed the reins of the force's Twitter account in March, Osoko opted to spam followers with pictures of cats wearing hats.

"Being silly sometimes helps humanize our officers and make them more approachable. It's also just a lot of fun."

The Victoria Police Department has spammed Twitter followers with pictures of cats wearing hats, among other humorous tactics.
COURTESY VICPD

**Cats with hats**

**"Being silly sometimes helps humanize our officers and make them more approachable. It's also just a lot of fun."**
Bowen Osoko, Victoria Police Department

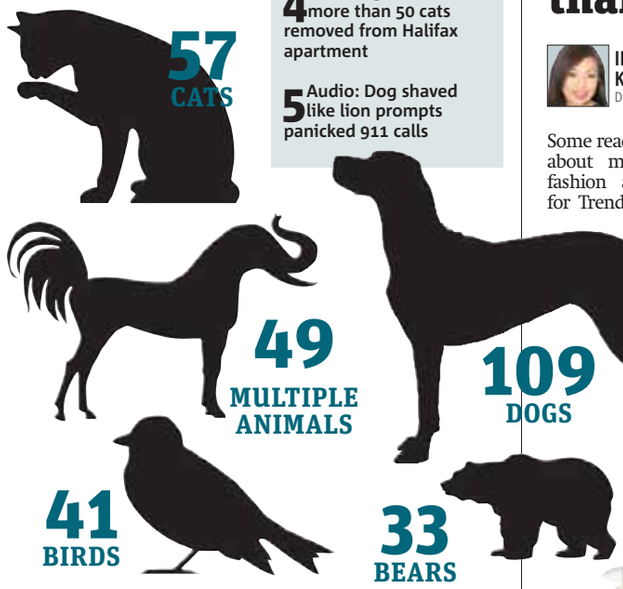
# Which animal is top dog?

COLIN MCNEIL
Metro web editor

Animals. They're cute, they're cuddly, and they have a furry iron grip on the Internet. From the continuing antics of the Ikea monkey to the Toronto Zoo's pandas, it's been quite a year for Canadian fauna, but which four-legged friend is top dog at metronews.ca? The answer may give you paws for thought. There have been 539 stories on metronews.ca tagged "animals" in 2013. Here are the top 5 animals (by number of stories).

**Top stories by views**

1. Photos: Regina squirrels tangled by sticky situation
2. Warning: Graphic new images surface of GuZoo animal farm
3. Video: Elephant seal inhales meal in blink of an eye
4. Hoarding case sees more than 50 cats removed from Halifax apartment
5. Audio: Dog shaved like lion prompts panicked 911 calls



Irene Kuan's "sparrow face" selfies. CONTRIBUTED

# Glymm. There's more to being a beauty editor than sparrow-face selfies



IRENE KUAN
Digital associate managing editor

Some readers have complained about my work as Metro's fashion and beauty blogger for Trends Report, labelling it sexist and shallow.

Granted, writing about "sparrow face selfies" and "bitchy resting face" doesn't suggest hard journalism, but the beauty industry is what it is.

In fact, if it hadn't been for an assignment reviewing beauty boxes, I would have never stumbled upon this story: One reader claimed she had been scammed by a subscription beauty box service called Glymm. The company charged her for a yearly subscription and then sent an abrupt email about their closure. It shuttered its business, website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, while keeping customers' money.

As a blogger, I care about my readers and their feedback.

I tracked the founder of Glymm using LinkedIn and badgered his secretary for information over the phone. I also used my ties as a beauty blogger to get reaction from other beauty-box businesses. After all, there were tons of irked Glymm subscribers in an industry that is still working to establish itself.

The week of April 25 the Glymm story generated more than 10,000 website views and 20,000-plus views on my Storify. It even prompted a company, Nail Polish Canada, to link to my story and provide free gifts to customers bilked by Glymm.

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# Bottle-cap story goes viral

LUCY HAINES/FOR METRO IN EDMONTON

**Offensive blunder**

## Vitamin Water commits big business gaffe

CANDICE WARD
Reporter in Edmonton

While Blake Loates — who discovered the now-infamous "You Retard" bottle cap on the top of a bottle of Vitamin Water (a Coca-Cola product) back in September in Edmonton — has been satisfied with the outcome of the ordeal and moved on, the story still seems to be making headlines as one of the worst Canadian business blunders of 2013.

As a journalist, it was exciting to see a story I helped to uncover go viral and facilitate positive change within a major corporation, but it was also difficult to watch the toll the story was taking on the family.

Like Loates, I was unprepared for the story to go international so quickly, with major news outlets from around the world picking it up.

When stories like this one become viral, people tend to take to the web with their opinions — some supportive and others not so supportive.

Loates was never out for media attention (as I had approached her for the story), 15 minutes of fame or financial gain. She merely sought to bring awareness to the pain the word can cause — even if it was intended to be understood in its French context.

To me, she was a hero for standing up for something she believed was wrong and having the courage to stand by it, despite the criticism she was receiving.

**Quick with apologies**

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Coca-Cola was quick to apologize for the marketing mistake, cancelled the promotion and even went above and beyond to donate $100,000 to charity.

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# International

From strange to serious — the world was a fascinating and sometimes heartbreaking place in 2013.

**An eagle's eye for trends**

LACY ATALICK
Metro copy editor

## Selebrating selfies

Two weeks after the Oxford Dictionary declared "selfie" to be the word of the year, an Australian eagle with a flair for the topical put the icing on the proverbial cake by stealing a video camera, recording its 110-kilometre journey and, oh yeah, snapping a selfie along the way. As the selfie has become ubiquitous, app developers have capitalized — principally by offering photo-editing technology to capture a best look — while bloggers have borne witness to the form's avant garde (hint: the duck face, the sparrow and the "squinch"). But as far as I'm concerned, the eagle's is so far the best, most transcendent, least-filtered selfie. Its beak seems to poke the camera's lens, to pierce the scrim between parody and coincidence, and I can't help but laugh at what we've become.

## 'The People's Pope.' Will Francis be a paragon of progressive papacy?

MIKE PALMA
Metro copy editor

Not long after Pope Benedict XVI became the first Holy Father in centuries to quit his job, his successor, Francis, has captured headlines and hearts with his progressive approach to the papacy. I grew up Catholic, and his humility, his focus on the poor, and his expressed tolerance of gays and non-believers has landed him in my good books as well.

But is Francis really a progressive symbol of an evolving church? Time hailed him as "The People's Pope" in its Person of the Year cover story and suggested he's "poised to transform" the Vatican. He's unquestionably been great PR compared to the previous pope, who struck me as being harsher and more conservative than John Paul II before him. But how much power does Francis actually have to change things for good?

**Pope Francis.** FRANCO ORIGLIA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Even if Francis makes the poor and downtrodden the focus of his entire papal career, his church remains strictly against homosexuality, divorce, contraception and abortion. Unless he's willing and able to change the official rules, I'm not sure I'll continue to find him so delightful.

## Royally inundated

CAROL CHUNG
Metro copy editor

**The arrival of Prince George of Cambridge was the most anticipated birth in the history of modern media. At least, that's the assumption you could make when looking back at the relentless press coverage of the royal pregnancy. Some readers were likely sick of hearing about Will and Kate's spawn long before he popped out of the womb, but that heady mix of wealth, privilege and youth is catnip for the masses, journalists included. If there's one thing we can take away from the baby bombardment it's that the British monarchy is in no danger of being dethroned, not with the press at its side.**

*Gentlemen, start your engines.*

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Egypt

## 'An uncertain reality'

DEENA DOUARA
Metro copy editor

Calls to relatives in Egypt are reminders that while the deteriorating state of affairs — of people's spirits and dreams and savings — is frustrating to behold from here, it's an uncertain reality — a nightmare — over there.

I was there this summer, in the leadup to the anniversary of then-president Mohamed Morsi's inauguration. I tried to understand the arguments: why Egyptians must protest; call for legal processes; stay home and give him a fair chance. I tried to capture that atmosphere for Metro, on TV and for Huffington Post, all garnering strong reactions. As protests intensified, so did people's rhetoric. A prevalent "You're with us or with the terrorists" approach took root, serving to justify military crackdowns and delegitimizing nuanced opinions that didn't conform neatly to "pro-military" or "pro-Muslim Brotherhood."

The 2011 revolution was one of the most dramatic scenes Egyptians witnessed in at least three decades. There was uncertainty and disagreement and plenty of anger. But I believe it is 2013 that really changed Egyptians. Mistrust, contempt, revenge, hatred — these sentiments are relatively new, and they are frightening.

As repression, imprisonment and censorship have seemingly increased alongside an ever-declining economy, Egyptians now must too fear their neighbours. And divided, they say, is how they fall.

An Egyptian woman reacts in Tahrir Square the day after former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, the country's first democratically elected president, was ousted from power on July 4, 2013 in Cairo.
ED GILES/GETTY IMAGES FILE

# Keeping an eye on Syria

ALI ZAFAR
Metro copy editor

Nearly three years later, the Arab Spring has morphed into a disgruntled winter in Syria. While several Arab nations have toppled their dictators, Syria continues to be stuck between rebel strongholds and leader Bashar al-Assad.

Bearing the wrath of this power struggle are the citizens of the country. Around two million of them have been displaced and Amnesty International estimates that more than 100,000 people have been killed since the conflict started in March 2011.

I've seen atrocities committed both in the name of religion and by iron-fist rulers while living in the Middle East and South Asia, which is why the plight of Syrians is something I can relate to. Being considered a religious minority in Pakistan, I can empathize with the woes of religious minorities in Syria, worried about their country under the control of Islamist rebels. It's why I'll keep a close eye on stories coming out of Syria in 2014.

Steubenville

## Victim blaming

JILLIAN BELL
Metro copy editor

For many rape victims, the rape itself is just the beginning of their nightmare. They are shamed and doubted. Their every action is questioned: What was she thinking wearing that skirt? Or drinking that much alcohol? This year, we saw the world rally around a rape victim in the Steubenville case. This was a refreshing, but an all too rare occurrence. If only every case of sexual assault generated such an uproar, perhaps more women would have the courage to report being raped, and more rapists would be held accountable.

## Manning. The truth at what cost?

KEVIN HAMILTON
Metro copy editor

Chelsea Manning
GETTY IMAGES FILE

Chelsea Manning is a name too quickly forgotten. This summer, the disgraced soldier was convicted of espionage for transferring classified U.S. military files to WikiLeaks, receiving a 35-year sentence. The attention paid to Manning does little justice to the immensity of her actions. The biggest leak in U.S. history fuelled allegations of corrupt tactics, moral bankruptcy and outright war crimes. But the world instead fixated on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and has now moved on to NSA leaker Edward Snowden. Manning was further marginalized during her trial as her mental stability was called into question. And her announcement that she would live as a woman caused no end of distraction. All of this overshadowed what I think should be the true focus of the affair: ethics. Was Manning justified in breaking the law, potentially harming U.S. interests and possibly putting lives at risk in order to expose the truth? What acts are acceptable in the name of security? And how can a government remain accountable to its people while keeping its activities secret?

Readers' online selections

Nothing hard-hitting here: Metro online readers gravitated towards a tiny penis contest, a giant golden cookie and a lion-like dog as their favourite international stories of 2013, as picked through our Metropolitan Panel

### Interview with a Smallest Penis contest winner

Meet Nick Gilronan: the winner of the Smallest Penis in Brooklyn. Gilronan entered the contest held in Kings County Bar in Brooklyn, N.Y. in August and came out on top despite the, uhh, stiff competition. Anyway, you guys couldn't get enough of Metro's Q & A with this guy.
METRO WORLD NEWS

### Search for Germany's giant golden cookie

Found missing at the beginning of this year: One golden cookie, weighing around 20 kg. The rectangular gilded bronze sculpture was part of a statue gracing the facade of German cookie baker Bahlsen's Hannover office. A police statement said a newspaper received a picture showing someone in an outfit similar to Sesame Street's Cookie Monster holding a golden cookie. The sender wrote to demand cookies be delivered to children at a city hospital. Police were not sure at the time if it was the same cookie, or a real claim of responsibility. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### Dog shaved like lion prompts 911 call

A dog that has been shaved to look like a lion set off a panic in Norfolk, Va. in January. Three 911 calls came in on the same day reporting a lion wandering the streets. It's "roaming loose in the neighbourhood a few blocks from the zoo," one caller reported to the 911 dispatcher at 10:19 a.m. After the 911 calls, Norfolk police called the Virginia Zoo to make sure its lions were all accounted for. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

### MSN messenger goes the way of ICQ

Microsoft's venerable Messenger program was moved to the great big recycling bin in the sky this year. Users had until March 15 to migrate their accounts over to Skype, which the software company acquired in 2011. At its peak, Messenger boasted 300 million users in more than 60 countries. Microsoft will continue Messenger in China, due to the peculiar nature of the Chinese Market. METRO

### Having same name apperently not the secret to a successful marriage

It took a simple Facebook message from one Kelly Hildebrandt to another Kelly Hildebrandt to get the wheels of love turning. But it seems the two are no longer are no longer Facebook friends. The young couple filed for divorce in July. "How do they term it at the courthouse? Irreconcilable differences, that is what I would say," the male Hildebrandt told a newstation. "We gave it our best shot."
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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**Voices** This is rare. Three Metro columnists are asked to write about their most memorable work this year. Turns out it can't be done without your feedback.

# MY ONE LONG YEAR

JUST SAYIN'

**Paul Sullivan**
metronews.ca

Even though asking me to choose a favourite column is like asking me to proclaim a public preference for my goldfish over my hamster, I have dutifully reviewed Just Sayin' for the past year, and it turns out I have a lot to say, which might surprise a few people.

But I've managed to narrow it down.

Generally, I try to communicate my total bemusement with contemporary life. It's the best of times. It's the worst of times. It's the weirdest of times, right?

That makes for lots of material, such as:

CONTRIBUTED

Multi-billionaire Amazon's Jeff Bezos was in the news this year for buying the fabled Washington Post of Woodward and Bernstein fame for the equivalent of billionaire pocket lint: $250 million.

That's less, by the way, than what the Qatar Royal family paid for Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne's The Card Players — $259 million.

(Big deal. I paid $2.59 for The Card Players at the neighbourhood garage sale. I really love the look on the bulldog's face.)

ISTOCK IMAGES

Then there are those columns that are memorable for some really great bits, such as the one about the one-way expedition to Mars that was signing up potential colonists earlier this year:

"Therefore Mars One is looking for a special kind of person. Someone who is nuts enough to spend the rest of his or her life stuck in a climate-controlled hut the size of a portable toilet but well adjusted enough not to try to eat his or her fellow castaways."

What writing!

Of course, you can't write a column these days without having your own online anvil chorus, and I managed to hit a sour note writing about people who don't wear enough clothes on the beach. My protest went along aesthetic lines, not skin care, and the mob that formed outside my virtual door was not happy.

Here's just a taste: "Holy crap this is arguably the most ignorant thing I've ever read in my life."

You can't please all of the people all of the time, but if you try really hard, you can annoy all of the people all of the time.

Fortunately, I did manage to get an online standing O for a column I wrote about a movement to ban tipping that's just getting off the ground in New York and Chicago. One reader, named Crystal, gave me some unordinary positive feedback: "I don't usually write in to comment on articles of any sort, but after reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking. Excellent!"

Thanks, Crystal, I needed that. As you can tell, it's been a long year.

**Reader writes**

**"After reading your brief article I had to say, very well written, entertaining, all the while thought-provoking."** Crystal

# 2013 is over and I'm left holding the (mail)bag

HE SAYS

**John Mazerolle**
readers@metronews.ca

ISTOCK IMAGES

I've been told to pick one favourite 2013 column and reminisce, but my columns are like my children and once they're out in the world I will deny they are mine.

Instead, let's open the mailbag. After a year of columnastic genius I feel it's important for readers to provide a fresh perspective on how wonderful I am. For instance, one fan recently sent me a Facebook message that said my columns are "desperately TRYING to be funny. Alas, they just come off juvenile." To hear my work is desperately funny, yet childlike, is wonderful. I clicked on her page to thank her and learned she's graduated from "I didn't finish (2008)," which signals a level of brash independence and attention to detail I think we can all emulate. Under professional skills it said, "crack-smoking," which means she will soon be a writer (if she's joking) or the mayor of a large city (if she's not).

**Mail moment**

**"Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!"** Online Fan

Another reader let me know my column is "pure dribble." I briefly assumed it was an insult and he had misspelled 'drivel.' Then I realized it was a basketball-related compliment, and that he considers me the Michael Jordan of Metro columnists. Pure, unadulterated dribble. Swish.

Some other actual mailbag highlights: * "Hypocrit much?" (More than you. I add an 'e.') * "Do your research." (No.) * "Stupid yellow journalism at it's finest!!!" (There are numerous problems here, but they are amply overcome by the use of three exclamation points. Bravo.) And that's the 2013 mailbag. See you next year, readers — older, but not wiser!!!

# I swear, and I am a girl

SHE SAYS

**Jessica Napier**
@MetroSheSays

As 2013 comes to a close, it's fun to look back at some of the memorable columns I've written over the course of the year. Back in June, I wrote a piece about swearing in public. I described how my boyfriend and I had been reprimanded by an overbearing parent at a neighbouring table after dropping a few expletives during a Sunday brunch.

**From the inbox**

**"I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."**
Anonymous reader

I was hardly advocating for an uncivilized society full of foul-mouthed brutes, but the column definitely struck a nerve among our readers.

I received a few letters from people who identified swearing in public as a generational problem. One gentleman wrote an email stating, "I am saddened when I hear a young person, especially a young girl, making a public reference to parts of their body and their knowledge of sexual activity with obscenities."

ISTOCK IMAGES

I understand the importance of good manners, but I take offence to this notion that I should suppress any behaviour that is deemed 'unladylike' according to a 1950s standard.

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# The good, the bad and the ugly

**Year in review.** The beginning of a new year, like the opening of a new film, holds so much promise... It's time for Metro to screen 2013's crop

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

It's time to bid farewell to 2013 with a look at the most disappointing films of the year.

**Pacific Rim**
Giant robots! Fighting giant sea monsters! Directed by Guillermo del Toro! This could've been so good, and obviously we thought it would be, but the results were just... not so much.

**Only God Forgives**
Maybe Nicholas Winding Refn was punishing people for liking his fantastic "Drive" too much, but this art-house meditation on masculinity, violence and retribution — we think? — was just a slog.

**Star Trek Into Darkness**
We might have been less disappointed in this long-awaited sequel if J.J. Abrams had just come out and said from the get-go that Benedict Cumberbatch was playing Khan. If only that were the only problem with it, though.

**Jack the Giant Killer**
Maybe it was foolish to expect Bryan Singer to do something cool and interesting with the old Jack and the Beanstalk fairy tale, but this one just fell flat.

Director Guillermo del Toro really dropped the ball on Pacific Rim — a movie that promised so much and delivered so little. CONTRIBUTED

**Metro's picks**

1. Gravity
2. Blue Jasmine
3. 12 Years A Slave
4. Hunger Games
5. Dallas Buyers Club

**Oldboy**
Spike Lee's plodding, uninspired remake of Park Chan-wook's 2003 cult classic at least makes a strong case for renting the original. Some things don't translate well, apparently.

**Lovelace**
A lot of foreplay that led to not very much of anything else, this exploration of the woman behind Deep Throat held too much back.

**The Fifth Estate**
Maybe it was too soon to explore the rise and fall of WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange, but it seemed perfectly reasonable that Bill Condon and Benedict Cumberbatch were up to the task. Apparently not.

**Anchorman 2**
Following up an iconic comedy is tough, but we're still not sure what Adam McKay and Will Ferrell were thinking with most of the choices here. Lesson learned: A little bit of Steve Carell's Brick Tamland goes a long way. Also, the film's jokes about racism and sexism actually just play as racist and sexist. Maybe next time, guys?

**Enough Said**
James Gandolfini's last leading film role, Julia Louis-Dreyfus' return to movies, another chance for Nicole Holofcener to examine adult relationships? This one had so much going for it. Too bad the end result is flat, uninspired and far too pleased with itself.

**Metro pick**

## *American Hustle*

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

American Hustle's story of flim flam men and women, the FBI and a real life sting known as Abscam has emerged as my favourite movie of 2013. It's an entertainingly audacious movie that will doubtless be compared to The Wolf of Wall Street because of the similarity in tone and themes, but this time around director David O. Russell has almost out-Scorsese'd Martin Scorsese. Add to that unexpected and compelling performances from the a-list ensemble cast—Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence — and it adds up to the most fun I had at the movies this year.

We asked and you let us know that Gravity was your top movie pick for 2013. CONTRIBUTED

**Reader's pick**

**What do you think?** We recently polled Metro readers to see what film they considered to be the best of 2013. Gravity was the winner, hands down.

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# Metro's turn-up and tune-out in 2013

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**Metro's picks**

**Metro's picks for top five songs**

- **1.** Get Lucky, by Daft Punk
- **2.** Reflektor and Afterlife, by Arcade Fire
- **3.** Black Skinhead, by Kanye West
- **4.** Royals, by Lorde
- **5.** Thrift Shop, by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis

## No lines blurred in this selection

As a shameless Jay Z super fan, I want to say 2013's top song was Holy Grail featuring Justin Timberlake. But even I can't deny this year belonged to Blurred Lines by Robin Thicke featuring Pharrell Williams and T.I. A simplistic hook and its blend of R&B and pop helped the infectious Blurred Lines hold top spot on charts around the world. It also created its share of controversy (think music video with prancing topless supermodels and Thicke preemptively suing Marvin Gaye's family). Love it or hate it, at some point (maybe in a drunken stupor if you're a certain mayor) you likely caught yourself singing, "OK, now he was close, tried to domesticate ya..." IZABELA SZYDLO, METRO

**Metro picks**

## *Song of the Year: Royals by Lorde*

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

Talk about a song with universal appeal! What began as a track marketed to the alternative set has become the biggest cross-format hit in years.

This is largely due to what was left out of Royals. It would have been so easy (and tempting!) to mess up the song by over-producing it. Instead, there's an elegant simplicity to everything: an understated rhythm track and the barest hint of a bass line. Lorde's vocals do the rest. The song doesn't even contain a bridge. This is brilliant songwriting, an excellent performance and perfect production, all wrapped in one great song.

Crossover appeal lands Lorde at the top of Alan Cross's list. HANDOUT

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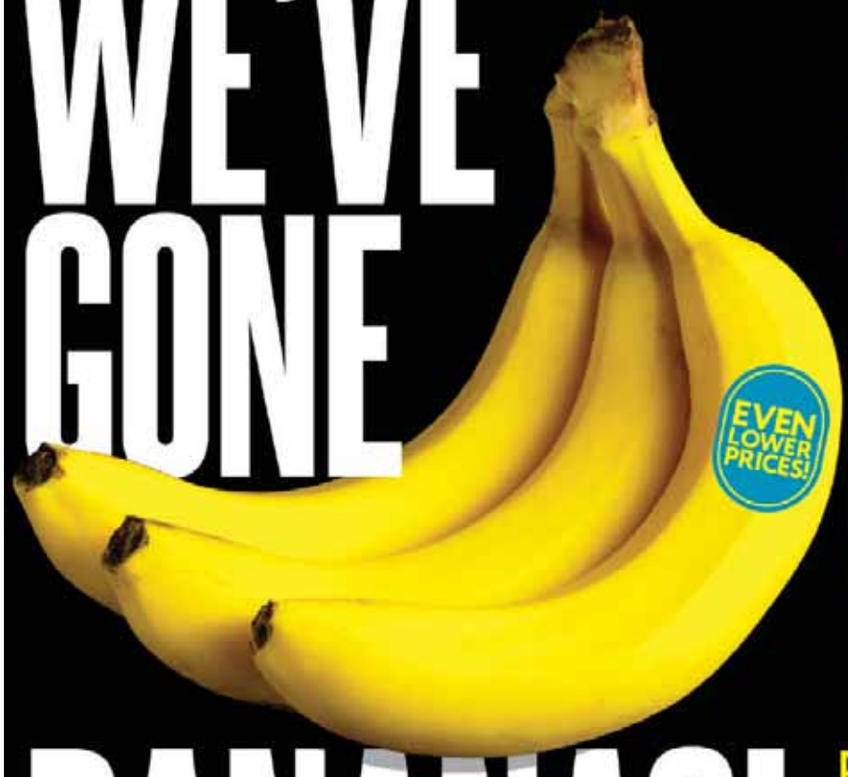


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# Cyberspace reaches new heights

**Metro's picks**

**1** Chris Hadfield's out-of-this-world version of Space Oddity inspired many. Kris Abel walks you through his blast off into the collective consciousness.

**2** Norwegian comedy group Ylves' video for What Does the Fox Say? was YouTube's top video of the year, and has even spawned an illustrated book.

**3** Amanda Bynes' 2013 tweets left many of us scratching out heads — and just shocked.

**4** Felix Baumgartner's freefall from the edge of space.

**5** Patrick Stewart's tweets left an impression on anyone within a half mile of Twitter this year.

## A Canadian star was born

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
scene@metronews.ca

Chris Hadfield won the Internet this year with a viral hit that was anything but accidental. He evoked the beauty of our world by sharing how difficult it was to leave its orbital view. These are complex emotions that he somehow captured with an iPad recording of himself singing David Bowie's Space Oddity. His Space Station video lessons and tweeted photos revealed a master communicator who understands the web better than anyone. Through him we have an extraordinary connection to space exploration, but also an example of how a cynical web culture can embrace values that are sophisticated and sincere.

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# HBO's Game belongs only on the Throne

**TV.** Whether you binge watched or faithfully tuned in, there were a number of great shows this year. Metro weighs in on what was tube-worthy in 2013

Alexandra Cavallo, our TV correspondent from south of the border, gives us her picks for the best shows on TV, however you may watch TV.

**Game of Thrones**

Game of Thrones had the best season ever. What other show has the balls to ruthlessly — and awesomely, creatively and bloodily — kill off multiple main characters like it ain't no thing? Game of Thrones reigns supreme. See what I did there?

**House of Cards**

Other than HBO (and FX and A&E and — well, damn, seems like television is killing it lately, huh?) Netflix is putting out some of the most exciting and game-changing programs. House of Cards — to put it simply — is utterly captivating, and this comes from a person, who, I admit it, doesn't even vote. Politics is not my thing. But this show has it all: intrigue, sex, violence, scandal and Kevin Spacey. Enough said.

**Project Runway**

Here's my shout-out to reality TV. I love reality it. I watch it all. Housewives, teen moms, geriatric moms, people who have sex with inanimate objects — I'll watch them all, as long as it's "real." But Project Runway (technically a reality competition show, which makes it higher brow) is legitimately a quality show. The contestants (for the most part) are actually astoundingly talented, the challenges are fresh and exciting, and there's still enough cat fighting and drama to sate my appetite for lowbrow reality crap.

The shocking Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones made Metro's list of the best of 2013. HANDOUT

**Girls**

How did nobody else even mention this show? I don't care what anybody says, Lena Dunham is a genius and remarkably likeable despite airing her flaws — both emotional and physical — for the whole world to gawk at. Sure, the second season didn't quite meet the very high bar that the debut season set — it was a little too dark, and sometimes depressing — but as a 20-something girl myself (29 still counts) I can totally relate to almost everything that is said and done on this show. Don't judge me.

**Nathan For You**

Most people have probably never seen or even heard of this show. Get familiar, people, because Canadian comedian Nathan Fielder is one of the funniest dudes on the tube right now. This docu-reality comedy series basically features Fielder playing a deadpan, dead-eyed version of himself, using his "business background" to help out failing companies and individuals. Spoiler alert: He is not helpful.

Trust me, you've got to watch it.

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO/MWN

**Metro's picks**

1. Breaking Bad comes to an end
2. Toronto Mayor Rob Ford is lampooned on every major late night talk show and Saturday Night Live
3. The murder-filled Red Wedding episode of Game of Thrones shocks viewers not familiar with the book series.
4. Arrested Development returns to TV via Netflix
5. Netflix series House of Cards becomes the first web TV show to receive major Primetime Emmy Award nominations, and goes on to win in three categories.

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# Top headlines of Hollywood's 2013

**They did what?** It was a shock-and-awe year in celeb gossip, and Metro's editors never hesitated to chime in on the tabloid chatter

Love them or hate them, it was hard to get off the blinged-out, baby-making bus that was Kimye this year. GETTY IMAGES

Pop culture gets a bad rap, according to Metro's gossip editor, Dorothy Robinson. Sure, it's lowbrow (especially when Miley Cyrus decides to take her clothes off with no deference to taste or talent) and it births fame-hungry monsters (Kimye, you are a creation even Walter Winchell couldn't dream up). Yet, the hijinks and disasters of people who fly so very high take us away from the humdrum of everyday life.

Keeping up with Miley is a nice distraction from the fact that the cable bill is due. Watching Beyonce at the Super Bowl is a reminder of what is humanly possible if you have drive, talent and a whole lot of luck. And witnessing the untimely deaths of two stars reminds us that even our little lives are ones worth living. In fact, maybe we're the lucky ones, blessed to be outside looking in — instead of the other way around.

**Here is what some of our editors had to say about the year in gossip:**

"I didn't put the Royal Baby on my list because I thought that fell under news. Come on: Kate Middleton should NEVER be on the same list as Miley or Kim Kardashian. And although Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger wasn't earth-shaking, it was so delightfully weird that I thought it deserved a mention." **DOROTHY ROBINSON**

Who wasn't confused by this Canadian coupling? GETTY IMAGES

"I, for one, definitely had Beyonce winning the Super Bowl on my list. Nothing can stop her, not even a blackout. I don't even remember who actually played. All I remember is the Destiny's Child reunion and Beyonce's black lace body suit. She wins." **EMILY LAURENCE**

"I can't find any evidence supporting the theory that Kanye has a sense of humor; I fear he is gravely serious. We mere mortals just do not understand him." **T. MICHELLE MURPHY**

I guess unlike other calculated 'Look at me! I'm no longer a Disney pop princess! I'm now a woman!' coming-out moments (see: Britney in the red pleather body suit; Christina's suggestive Genie in a Bottle), Miley's coming out seems raw and unpolished. She's going more for shock value than sex appeal. Which, honestly, is slightly refreshing. Just put the tongue away, girlfriend." **DOROTHY ROBINSON**

## Metro's picks

1. Miley Cyrus ditches her clean-cut image by twerking at the MTV awards, smoking a joint on air at the MTV Europe Awards, and working with photographer Terry Richards — and those are just some of her antics.
2. Amanda Bynes — see Liz Beddall's story to your right.
3. Kanye West and Kim Kardashian brought forth a baby and decided it would be fun to name her North.
4. Justin Beiber wreaked havoc in his neighbourhood with his driving, peed in a bucket, lost his monkey, and then had a drama-filled South American tour before heading to Australia for more of the same.
5. Angelina Jolie surprised the world by announcing she underwent a double mastectomy.

## Amanda on our minds

### Reading between the Bynes

While it seems 2013 was the year of the squeaky-clean-songtress-turned-train-wreck-tabloid-queen, there was arguably no one who was featured as consistently on Metro's Dish page as former WB sweetheart Amanda Bynes.

Multiple brushes with the law, airborn bongs, driveway fires, neon wigs and one trainwreck of a Twitter feed meant that Bynes all too often became our feature focus.

Having recently received treatment for mental illness, we hope 2014 brings Amanda some peace, health and much-needed time away from the tabloids.

**LIZ BEDDALL/METRO**

Amanda Bynes GETTY IMAGES

## Dorothy Robinson's picks

1. Miley Cyrus' crazy year.
2. The evolution of Kimye (and the birth of baby North West).
3. Beyonce wins the Super Bowl.
4. Cory Monteith overdosing.
5. Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger.

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# The five worst fitness trends of 2013 we hope don't return

**Year-end review.** Workouts can get boring from time to time but these ideas on how to switch things up missed the mark this year.

VAWN HIMMELSBACH
life@metronews.ca

It's not a bad idea to switch up your workout routine every now and then to challenge your muscles and stay motivated. But in the quest for new ways to do old exercises, some trends might be a tad questionable.

Backwards is just backwards.

**Backwards running**

Sure, running can get monotonous, but is running backwards the answer? There's a reason why people are doing it: According to a study by the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, running backwards uses 30 per cent more energy than moving forward at the same speed. And, supposedly, it's easier on your knees. But let's face it; running backwards is an accident waiting to happen since — if it's not obvious — you can't see where you're going. Not to mention it looks ridiculous.

There is nothing wrong with weightlifting. But weightlifting in the heat doesn't make sense. ALL IMAGES ISTOCK PHOTOS

**Boutique/hybrid yoga**

If you're into yoga, there are a variety of styles to suit your personality, from ashtanga to moksha to yin. But now, you can mix those warrior poses with … hula-hoops, trampolines and martial-arts kicks. Or do yoga on a paddleboard, to disco music or even with your dog (doga). But yoga isn't about total body sculpting or getting a cardio workout — it's about quieting your mind. And it's hard to quiet your mind while doing disco moves in tree posture.

**Extreme HIIT … for average Joes**

High-intensity interval training (or HIIT) has many benefits: Bursts of vigorous exercise (think squats and burpees) followed by brief rest periods can burn calories — fast. That's why we've seen the rise of workouts like CrossFit, and the Insanity and P90X DVD series.

Run from this trend.

But along with the increase in popularity of these types of workouts has come an increase in injury, from slipped disks to torn rotator cuffs. According to a recent study published by The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, 16 per cent of CrossFit participants quit the program due to overuse or injury. At least it's good news for orthopedic surgeons.

**Themed runs (that involve barbed wire)**

Working out should be fun, and hey, who wouldn't be motivated to run faster when being chased by zombies? While themed workouts from Tough Mudder to colour runs (running through clouds of coloured cornstarch) can be motivating or push you to challenge your endurance, any athletic endeavor that involves wading through ice water under barbed wire or being zapped by live wires is questionable. Perhaps next we'll start seeing live wires attached to treadmills so you'll get zapped if you're not running fast enough.

**Hot weightlifting**

Traditional weightlifting remains one of the best ways to build muscle. But one of the latest fads takes weightlifting to a new level — pumping iron in the heat. The concept behind Bikram yoga (where the temperature in the room is cranked to 40.6 C with a humidity of 40 per cent) is now being applied to everything from barre to spinning and weightlifting classes. But according to a recent study by the American Council on Exercise, turning up the heat doesn't actually burn extra calories. You just think you are, all the while risking dehydration and even heat stroke. If you like the heat, best to stick to Bikram.

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Class B light-duty full-size pickups. ~Includes 6 months trial of Directions & Connections with "Turn-by-Turn Navigation (Turn-by-Turn Navigation not available in certain areas; availability impacted by some geodoraphical/cellular limitations); advisor assisted-routing available. Visit onstar.ca for coverage map, details and system limitations. ~~Services vary by model and conditions

# Styles with staying power

This year saw plenty of questionable clothing choices sashay down the streets, but among them were a few wardrobe wins that we guarantee won't be disappearing once the winter flurries die down. Here are three fabulous looks of 2013 that Metro knows you'll still find in the new year.

LIZ BEDDALL
Metro World News

**H&M Ballet pumps, $29.95**
hm.com

**Banana Republic leopard-jacquard fit and flare dress, $160**
bananarepublic.ca

## Animal prints

## Box clothes

**Swarovski Star Evening Bag in silver, $650**
swarovski.com

**GUESS black- and gold-tone Minaudiere, $50**
guess.ca

**LOFT Gilded-lace-yoke sleeveless dress, $89.50**
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**Joe Fresh embellished collar silk shirt, $59**
joefresh.com

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**JUDY'S TIP OF THE WEEK**

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Judy Jobse, Service Manager

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# Travel stories that made the map this year

For better or worse, here are three travel stories that made their mark in 2013. From New York City's towers, to Turkey's eastern promises, to the 'Triumph' of cruise lines in the wake of bad news, these tales stood out and made the world take notice.

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

## New York City

The city of skyscrapers hit a new and moving milestone this past May when the spire was placed atop of One World Trade Center, making it the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere. Located where the Twin Towers stood prior to the 9/11 attacks, the spire reaches a symbolic height of 1,776 feet (541 m) in reference to the year of American independence. This city is constantly pushing the envelope; whether it is the on-going development of the High Line, the elevated urban park that now snakes its way through five kilometres of Manhattan's West Side, or the incredible Sleep No More film noir meets haunted house interactive theatre performance at the McKittrick Hotel.

## Turkey

Turkey has become a solid alternative for travellers looking for culture and sun in the wake of troubles in the Middle East. Despite incidents that have resulted in the country receiving international travel warnings of its own, Turkey is set to bring in a record $30 billion in tourism revenue in 2013. In the southern coastal city of Antalya, ground was recently broken for the Gazipaşa Airport, which is set to serve at least 1.5 million tourists after the completion of the new track and terminal building. Top Canadian adventure company G Adventures alone has reported a 42 per cent increase year-on-year for travellers to Turkey and has introduced four new Turkish trips for 2014.

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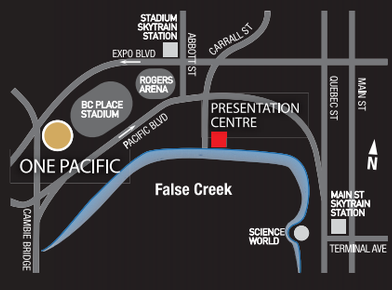


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CONCORD PACIFIC

# I'll take a cold cerveza with that

**Year of Mexican food.** You've been fooled long enough with cheesy dishes and store-bought salsa. Authentic Mexican is taking over — olé!

**NUTRI-BITES**
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Mexican has gone beyond the smothered-in-cheese dishes. ISTOCK

Remember when Mexican food meant cookie cutter platters of oddly coloured white rice with a bunch of stuff covered in cheese?

You may have gotten a bowl of pre-fab corn chips and bottled salsa instead of bread as an appetizer.

Luckily, 2013 saw the rise of true Mexican food. It showed up everywhere, from the very hip food truck culture running away with the foodie heart to the top end of just about every urban menu.

Some of the foods that we can't get enough include pulled pork, fish tacos and burritos. And you really haven't lived unless you've found churros with the caramel-like dulce de leche sauce. (Don't forget the side of tequila, which was the beverage of 2013.)

Real Mexican food is wholesome, and it varies across the country from fish-based seaside to tropical fruit interiors, but they all have three things in common: corn, chili peppers and beans. The Europeans added pork, chicken and tomatoes and North Americans topped it all off with some flair.

Taco night is no longer spice from a box mixed with ground beef and corn shells, although, they are certainly retro-welcome. Think broader.

### Chicken

Toss a chicken in the slow cooker with one of the many creative jars of salsa on the market and cook all day. Pull chicken from the bones and serve with tostadas, artisan corn and wheat tortillas plus toppings like frozen corn simply roasted on a cookie sheet in the oven.

### Cole Slaw

Think about a grated cole slaw mix instead of shredded lettuce. Top with cocoa nibs, any manner of chopped chilies and any combo of fresh herbs. Serve with fresh lime juice and soda water with muddled mint (go ahead add some tequila!)

### Pulled Pork

Pulled pork couldn't be easier. The low and slow oven versions create the best melt in your mouth recipes. Sauce options run the gamut from barbecue sauce to the chocolate and chili based mole sauce. This one pot wonder is the best crowd pleaser to come out of this Mexican trend. Pork shoulder or arm is an affordable (if fatty) cut that can't be ruined as long as you keep the oven temperature below 300 and the time at least an hour per pound.

### Churro Dip

Since churros are hard to find, must be fresh and deep frying is a pain (not to mention crazy unhealthy!)

Why not go with the classic churro dip: dulce de leche and forgo the donut? This sweet milk caramel sauce can be now purchased jarred but the quickie cheater recipe using only sweetened, condensed milk is ridiculously easy. Use it to drizzle onto vanilla pudding, fresh fruit or chocolate cookies and you are right on the Mexican trend. Which will, by the way, continue for a few more years... THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND TORONTO PERSONAL NUTRITIONIST. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT WWW.MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

**Wine of the Year**

## 2011 Vintage Port

**LIQUID ASSETS**
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

"I'm loading up on 2011 Vintage Port," says Peter Rockwell, Metro's expert for all things liquid. "Considered one of the best years in decades; all the big houses released a version this year. Dow's 2011 ($79.49) is spectacular; and will age well into 2063."

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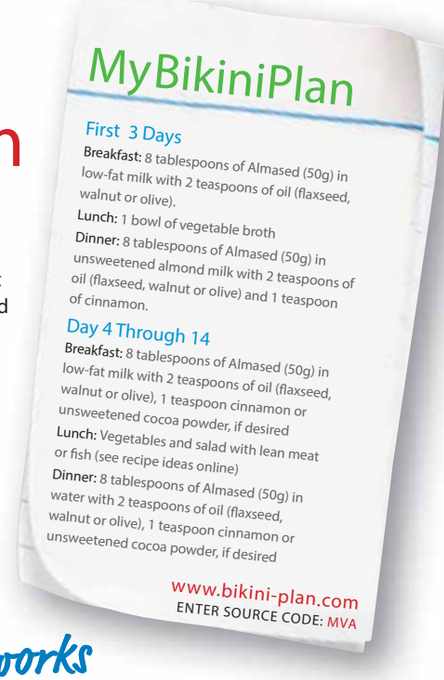
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Dinner: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in unsweetened almond milk with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive) and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon.
Day 4 Through 14
Breakfast: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in low-fat milk with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive), 1 teaspoon cinnamon or unsweetened cocoa powder, if desired
Lunch: Vegetables and salad with lean meat or fish (see recipe ideas online)
Dinner: 8 tablespoons of Almased (50g) in water with 2 teaspoons of oil (flaxseed, walnut or olive), 1 teaspoon cinnamon or unsweetened cocoa powder, if desired
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**Sports** Vancouver got a number of jolts in the form of shakeups. Bidding adieu were the likes of Simon, Vigneault, Schneider and Rennie.

# Superman soars again in Grey Cup triumph

CAM TUCKER
Metro reporter

After years as a Lion, Geroy Simon joined the Roughriders and won his third Grey Cup. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

It wasn't so much that he was traded; it happens all the time in professional sports. It's part of the business, and transactions, especially ones of a specific magnitude, are often drivers of the business, particularly in the media.

And certainly, no athlete is above being traded (see: Wayne Gretzky).

But when Geroy Simon, the greatest receiver in Canadian Football League history, was sent to the Saskatchewan Roughriders, I was still taken aback.

In Simon's case, there was a feeling that his time with the Lions was coming to an end. No longer was he the premier target in the passing game.

He was willing to take a reduced role in the offence moving forward into the 2013 season, but not to the extent the coaching staff had outlined.

General manager Wally Buono equated the day of Jan. 24 to that of a funeral.

"I never thought that I would be leaving the B.C. Lions in this capacity," said Simon.

"This has been the toughest decision I've ever had to make in my professional life."

Simon played 12 years with B.C. He was a member of two Grey Cup championship teams, broke the CFL record for most receiving yards, had nine consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons, was named the league's Most Outstanding Player in 2006, and was a fan favourite for years.

He was also well immersed in the community, both as a member of the Lions and as a father who coached minor football.

Some things in life you just get accustomed to. Seeing Geroy Simon's familiar No. 81 in an orange Lions uniform was one of them. In professional sports, especially on the media side, you can't believe that one player will spend the remainder of his career with one team just because he's been there for so long.

Simon is a proud individual. He believed back in January that he could still play at an elite level. On the other end, the Lions had some good up-and-coming receivers — Nick Moore and Courtney Taylor — ready to step into a starring role.

Simon's time here was simply up.

At the press conference that very same day, I remember thinking, "This is really happening."

Buono and Simon talked about the merits of their friendship, created out of a working partnership on the football field, the disconnect between the team and the player in this often cold business of football, and what Simon felt the future held for him.

Buono asked: "Will there ever be another Superman?"

Interesting, because roughly 10 months after the blockbuster trade, Simon twice showed off his familiar Superman touchdown pose in Roughrider green and white in the Grey Cup game.

The Roughriders won. Simon had Grey Cup championship No. 3.

**Tide of change**

**"Some things in life you just get accustomed to. Seeing Geroy Simon's familiar No. 81 in an orange Lions uniform was one of them."**

4 SPORTS

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From the low of the Canucks' early playoff exit to the high of the Canadians' third straight title, here are how the top 2013 stories rank.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

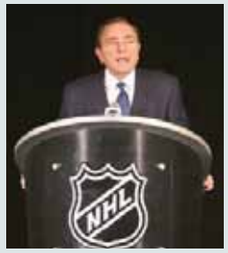
## 1 Vigneault out, Tortorella in

It hardly came as a surprise when Alain Vigneault was fired as head coach of the Vancouver Canucks. Another first-round playoff defeat meant the end of his tenure in Vancouver after seven seasons, including the 2010-11 campaign in which the Canucks came within one win of the Stanley Cup.

The organization hired fiery bench boss John Tortorella, who at his opening press conference in June highlighted the team's need for more "bite" and vowed to build a better relationship with the media.

**Alain Vigneault** GETTY IMAGES

## 2 The lockout



**NHL commissioner Gary Bettman apologized for the tardy start to the season.** GETTY IMAGES

A work stoppage between the National Hockey League owners and its players' association came to an end on Jan. 6, on its 113th day. The NHL has since put up record-breaking television numbers in the U.S. and the business seems to be doing all right — the league just announced a 12-year, $5.2-billion TV deal with Rogers Communications in Canada.

## 3 Whitecaps let Rennie go

Martin Rennie's job as Vancouver Whitecaps head coach had been on the line for some time, and he was let go just days after the Major League Soccer regular season ended. His tenure in Vancouver lasted just two years.

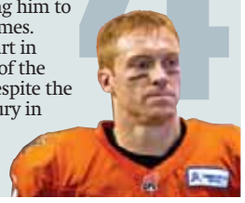
The club completely dropped off in the middle of August and could not recover enough to make the playoffs. They were eliminated in the second-to-last game of the season.

**Martin Rennie** GETTY IMAGES

## 4 Lulay shoulders another injury

No one will doubt Travis Lulay's toughness as a CFL quarterback. But on Sept. 15, while plowing over a DB for a touchdown run, Lulay suffered a subluxation in his throwing shoulder, forcing him to miss six of the next seven games.

He returned in time to start in the club's only playoff game of the year and played quite well despite the loss. But the result of the injury in September was surgery in November.



**Travis Lulay** THE CANADIAN PRESS

**Vancouver's top**

**5**

**sports stories of the year**

## 5 C's are for championships

Count the Vancouver Canadians of the Northwest League as a dynasty in minor-league baseball.

The Canadians — a short-season Single-A affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays — won their third consecutive championship in September, in front of a sold-out crowd at historic Nat Bailey Stadium. The club was later named the top minor-league baseball franchise for the year.

**The Canadians are still on top in the Northwest League.** METRO

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# Tortorella-Canucks union going strong

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Ronnie Shuker
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After divorcing the team from Alain Vigneault this past summer, GM Mike Gillis made what looked like an odd proposal. Wed John Tortorella to the Vancouver Canucks? It was a spousal swap (Vigneault took over Tortorella's old flame in Manhattan) that had Vegas wedding written all over it and seemed destined to crash and burn. But six months later, it has turned into one of NHL's best matches and has Vancouver thinking Stanley Cup ring.

Media were either salivating or scared at the prospect of Tort's hair-trigger temper coming to a Canadian city. But when Gillis introduced his team's new patriarch, after signing a five-year pre-nup, Tortorella was a changed man. He said he'd play nice, and he has.

The players, meanwhile, especially his stars, didn't know what to expect. True to his word, Tortorella was demanding but faithful, and his players responded immediately. The Sedins, Ryan Kesler and Roberto Luongo all thrived with the added attention they got from their new coach in the form of increased ice time, and the Canucks went 9-5-1 in their first month.

**John Tortorella** GETTY IMAGES FILE

The honeymoon, however, came quickly to an end. The team seemed suddenly out of sync with its new beau behind the bench and went just 4-5-4 in November.

The low point of the season hit on Nov. 30. It was Tortorella's return to his old stomping grounds, Madison Square Garden. No doubt, he wanted to show his ex-club what it was missing. His players, though, weren't as emotionally invested in the game and the Canucks fell easily to the Rangers 5-2.

Ever since then, it's been marital bliss in Vancouver.

The next night, Tortorella and the Canucks flew to Carolina where they reconciled their differences and beat the Hurricanes 3-2. It was the start of something special.

After a trip to Nashville, and another win, they came home for a five-night stand against Phoenix, Colorado, Carolina, Edmonton and Boston. Five more victories and a seven-game winning streak later, Tortorella and Co. had finally found their groove together.

Backed by Tortorella, the Canucks have regained that much-missed swagger in their stride. They've taken on the identity of their coach and are playing with the mojo they had circa 2010-11. The Luongo-Cory Schneider soap opera is a thing of the past, Kesler is playing with unbridled passion again and the Sedins have proven they're anything but soft.

What could have been a complete disaster has turned into a match made in hockey heaven.

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## Horoscopes

### ♈ Aries
**March 21 - April 20**
You are on the threshold of a spectacular breakthrough. Which only goes to show that when you focus on a goal and follow up on it consistently, you can be a success. But don't get too full of yourself.

### ♉ Taurus
**April 21 - May 21**
You need a change of direction and the planets will see that you get it. But don't worry. You will like what the next few weeks bring your way very much indeed.

### ♊ Gemini
**May 22 - June 21**
You are who you are for a reason. If you stop wasting time fantasizing about who you would like to be and focus on doing a better job of who you are, you will soon be both successful and happy.

### ♋ Cancer
**June 22 - July 23**
Your problems are not as bad as you think, so quit worrying. Cosmic activity in your opposite sign of Capricorn will bring relationship matters to a head over the weeks, but there is no need to panic. You'll survive.

### ♌ Leo
**July 24 - Aug. 23**
You may be tempted to change something that has worked for years, but is that a good idea? There is every possibility that you will go too far and change things in a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary way.

### ♍ Virgo
**Aug. 24 - Sept. 23**
Play to your strengths and don't let what others are doing affect you in any way. There are some things you do better than most and those are the things you should be focusing on.

### ♎ Libra
**Sept. 24 - Oct. 23**
If you have been taking a loved one for granted, this could be a tricky day. Somehow you need to convince them that your feelings are still the same but it will take more than just words.

### ♏ Scorpio
**Oct. 24 - Nov. 22**
Something important is about to happen and chances are you will enjoy it. Most likely it will have something to do with your social life, so get out into the world and smile big!

### ♐ Sagittarius
**Nov. 23 - Dec. 21**
You may come into money over the next few days but it would be wrong to count on it to get you out of trouble. The only way you are going to improve your financial situation is to cut back on your commitments.

### ♑ Capricorn
**Dec. 22 - Jan. 20**
As cosmic activity in your sign reaches a peak over the new year period, you'll have to deal with situations that in the past you've tried to avoid. The good news is solutions can be found, but you've got to act now.

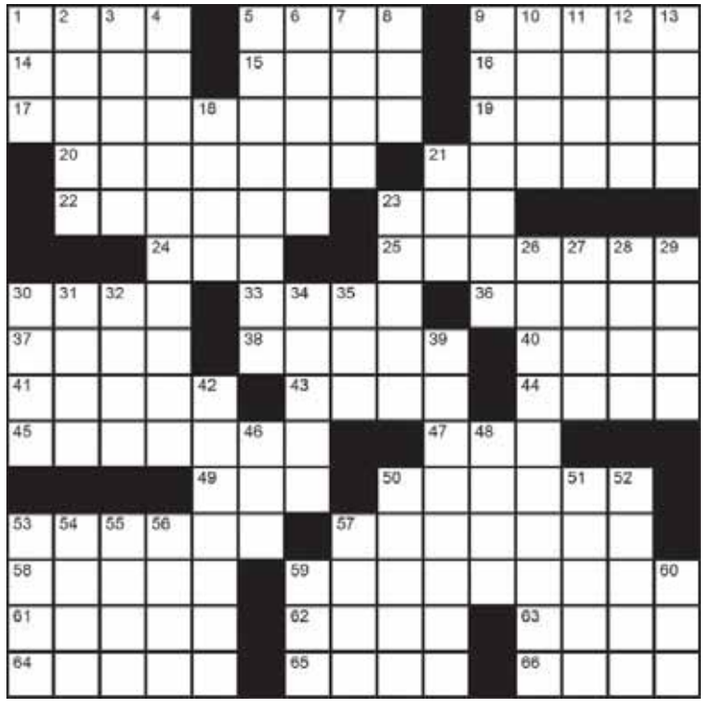
### ♒ Aquarius
**Jan. 21 - Feb. 19**
If your present approach to a problem is not working then clearly you need to tackle it from a different angle. Some people say you're too inflexible, too set in your ways to change. Prove them wrong.

### ♓ Pisces
**Feb. 20 - March 20**
Pay attention to what loved ones tell you over the next 24 hours because they can see something that you missed. If you listen to what they say and act on their advice, it could save you trouble. **SALLY BROMPTON**

## Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

**BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN**



**Across**

1. Pasta, e.g.
5. 17th Greek letters
9. Mother-of-pearl
14. __ code
15. Nobleman
16. Once more
17. December 26th significance: 2 wds.
19. Rene of movies
20. Be drifting alone at sea ...but suddenly become joyful!: 2 wds.
21. Slightly adjusts
22. Accompaniment
23. Musical fifth note, variantly
24. Exclaimed "That hurts!", say
25. Shopping: Door-__ special
30. George Michael's '80s group!
33. Architect Mr. Saarinen
36. France's longest river
37. Rush
38. Pilotless aircraft
40. Gift Tag: To and __
41. Nimbi
43. Prince of Wales' motto, Ich __ (I Serve)
44. Dick Tracy's beloved, __ Trueheart
45. '50s TV series about a Quebec family, "La famille __"
47. Best, __-rated
49. Fee-fi-fo-__
50. North or South, in The States
53. Neil Young song: 2 wds.
57. Subscriber's extension
58. Wickerworker's willow
59. Traditional pudding of Newfoundland: 2 wds.
61. Billy Bob Thornton flick, "The Man Who __ There" (2001)
62. 'Myth' suffix
63. National Velvet author Ms. Bagnold
64. Tiffs
65. Foundation
66. Lines of travel, for short

**Down**

1. Taxi
2. Sprang up
3. T. __ (Some dinosaurs)
4. __-__, Quebec (Former PM Brian Mulroney's birthplace)
5. Viewed as
6. "In case you __ noticed..."
7. Toward the mouth
8. Slick
9. Arctic whale having a spiral tusk
10. Chill
11. House, in Havana
12. Board game
13. Biblical grandson
18. Sugar substitute, Sweet'_ __
21. Maple Leafs, on scoreboards
23. Elegant biscuit
26. Ski slope surface sometimes: 2 wds.
27. Contract
28. God of love in Greek mythology
29. Sleep stages, commonly
30. Gift __
31. Transport stuff
32. Prefix to 'phobia' (Fear of heights)
34. Canadian fashion designer Mr. Morali-oglu
35. French queen's mate
39. Mire
42. Attempts
46. Amusing
48. __-dokey
50. Manet painting contemporary
51. Razz
52. 1966 Michael Caine film
53. Awesomenesses!
54. Office request [acronym]
55. Marge's daughter
56. Prince Michael of __ (Queen Elizabeth's cousin)
57 Costa __
59. Taradiddle
60. Hose-using rescue units, for short

## Dec. 24th's Crossword

## Sudoku

**How to play**
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 5 | | 4 | |
| 1 | 2 | | | | 6 | 5 | | |
| | 5 | | 8 | | | 3 | | |
| | 6 | | | 3 | 8 | | 5 | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | 7 |
| | 8 | | 4 | 7 | | | 6 | |
| | | 2 | | | 9 | | 3 | |
| | | 6 | 7 | | | | 1 | 8 |
| | 3 | | 2 | | | | | |

## Dec. 24's Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| 8 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 |
| 6 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| 2 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 4 |
| 9 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 |

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